

COMMUNICATIONS

A NATIONAL PARK IN SOUTHERN MOUNTAINS

That a splendid new National Park will be established, in the high Appalachian Mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee, now seems assured. Dr. Work, Secretary of the Interior, has appointed a commission and charged them with selecting the most beautiful and otherwise suitable area in these mountains in order that he may recommend its purchase to Congress. This commission, composed of five nationally known park experts, has spent much time afield during the current summer and fall, inspecting the various sites offered and have expressed themselves as being impressed with the scenic values of many locations far beyond their expectations. Ornithologists and nature lovers generally are keenly interested in the plan of conserving intact a large area in these mountains where primitive faunal and floral conditions are still extant and where they may be so kept for all time. Much of this rugged mountain area has already been destroyed by lumbering activities and the time for saving a large primitive area cannot be further delayed. The peaks in this area are the highest in America east of the Rockies, rising to more than 6700 feet. Their slopes are clad with the most beautiful and varied forests in the world and here may be found birds, animals and other forms of animate life which have been extirpated elsewhere. It is an area of exceeding interest to the naturalist, as the writer can testify after a number of field trips there. Apparently the most desirable section from all standpoints is that portion of the Great Smoky Mountains, which includes Mt. LéConte (6678), Mt. Guyot (6636), Clingmans Dome (6666), and the Balsam Mountains as far eastward as Waynesville, N. C. Such an area would perhaps include a thousand square miles and would be entirely different from any other National Park. Other areas being carefully considered are the Lindville Mountains, east of Asheville, and the Blue Ridge Mountains near Highlands, N. C., frequently spoken of as "The Sapphire Country."

Many other park sites have been considered in the eastern U. S., but the concensus of opinion is that the site referred to above should come first. After the precedent of acquiring this has been established by the Government it is likely that the acquisition of other Parks will rapidly come about until all those of outstanding merit will be made available to the public.

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